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THE VALLEY PATRIOT



valleypatriot.com

2004

11TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION!

2015

"Congress shall make no law..."

MARCH 2015
VOLUME 12, ISSUE 3
Edition 137

A FREE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF NEWS, COMMENTARY AND EVENTS, SERVING MA & NH



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WHY CHOOSE



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11th ANNIVERSARY BASH!



March 20, 2015
Lawrence Firefighter's Relief In

GOOD EEEEEVENING!

TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

7:15PM

DINNER BY DAILY DOSE CAFE &

THE TOMASELLI SISTERS

Al Kaprielian - GOOD EVENING!

Melvorn Taylor: "PAYING ATTENTION"

EMCEE: PUPPYGIRL KATE WHITNEY

***COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS**

JOHN MOLORI

***VALLEY PATRIOT GOOD WILL AMBASSADOR AWARD**

***VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD**

***VALLEY PATRIOT PRESIDENT'S AWARD**

***VALLEY PATRIOT 1ST AMENDMENT AWARD**

TOM DUGGAN REMARKS

*** VALLEY PATRIOT 1ST AMENDMENT
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD (NEW)**

DIANA DIZOGGIO: HAPPY!

LIGHTENING-ROUND ROASTERS:

***MIKE SULLIVAN *BILL MANZI * MIKE GAGLIARDI * DAN
RIVERA * JERRY VALLEY * JOE LIGOTTI * MICHELE MCPHEE**

***VALLEY PATRIOT HERO VETERAN AWARD**

***OFFICER TOM DUGGAN SR. PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD**

(RAFFLE DRAWING)

Bell Aire Music Productions, with DJ Rick Bellanti

In 2004 we called upon the community to come to us and tell the real news stories that the other newspapers refused to tell. Ten Years Later ... LOOK WHAT YOU HAVE ACHIEVED!!

OUR VOICE IS YOUR VOICE: *The Valley Patriot welcomes letters to the editor on any topic. We also welcome column/article submissions from elected officials, neighborhood associations, community organizers and news makers. Our mission is to give readers the unique opportunity to receive important information from those who are driving important public issues without the "creative editing" policy employed by most newspapers. Submissions from guest columnists/writers in The Valley Patriot are published without the filtered agenda of an editorial board. If you would like to write a column, letter, or article for The Valley Patriot please e-mail us at: ValleyPatriot@aol.com*

DONATING THEIR SERVICES

EMCEE: **Puppygirl Kate Whitney, One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue**

ENTERTAINMENT: **Bell-Air Music Productions**
Rick Bellanti - (978) 902-7041

DINNER: **Daily Dose Cafe** (Keith Wlodyka)
500 Merrimack St., Lawrence, (978) 557-8601
GraceMarie & Joyce Tomaselli - Mangia

COFFEE, PASTRIES: **Coffee Cann**
290 Merrimack St., Lawrence (Sal's Riverwalk)

FRUIT SALAD: **Flavor Fresh Fruit Brand**
274 Prospect St, Lawrence

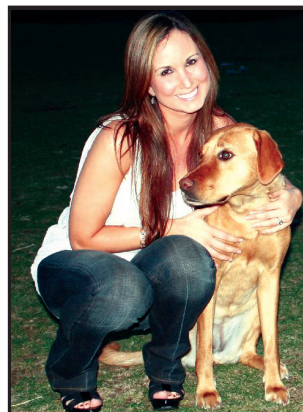
HUMMUS: **Sahtaine Restarant,**
Merrimack St. Methuen (978) 258-2186

AWARDS: **Henry's Jewelry and Awards**
77 Essex Street, Lawrence (978) 686-1012

PROGRAMS: Bob Wescott at **Copilabs:**
49 Methuen Street. Lawrence (978) 794-1413

PHOTOGRAPHER: **Rich Russell & Larry Richardson**
VIDEO: **Dan McGraw, Haverhill Cable Access**
WATER: **Doctor's Express, Methuen/N. Andover**

POPPCORN:
Showcase Cinema



PuppyGirl and Honey-Bunny

Portions of tonight's Raffle
will be donated to PuppyGirl
Kate Whitney's Favorite
Charity: **One Tail at a Time**
onetailatatime.com

OUR SPONSORS MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

PLATINUM SPONSOR - Laborer's Union LOCAL 175

GOLD SPONSORS: - McLennan & Co. Century 21
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SILVER SPONSORS: Methuen Patrolman's Association, Sheehan's Towing in Methuen, Methuen Councilor Sean Fountain, Register of Deeds Paul Iannuccillo, Tarshi Law Office in Lawrence, Bob Larochelle, Team Zingales-Remax Intrigue,

BRONZE SPONSORS: - Heav'nly Donut-North Andover, Author Kathleen LaPlante, Author Tim Imholt, John Felci, Corey Tree and Landscaping in Haverhill, Meredith Warren and Fred Van Magness of Lyric Properties, Joe Viel of Cemetery Services in Lawrence, Colizzi, Memorials, Northern Process Servers & Ronny, Berthium, Methuen City Councilor Ron Marsan, Methuen Superior Officer's Association



WHY CHOOSE



Janet McLennan

Matt McLennan

A - OUR AGENTS ARE

SMARTER, BOLDER, FASTER

We have moved over **35,000** local families

B - WE KNOW HOW TO SELL YOUR HOME

More Money in a Shorter Period of Time

C - OUR MARKETING PLAN

- Provides You with a **Neighborhood Expert**
- Gets you Top Billing on **ZILLOW, TRULIA HOMES.COM and REALTOR.COM**
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METHUEN

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978.373.2100

Congratulations to The Valley Patriot Celebrating 10 Years!!

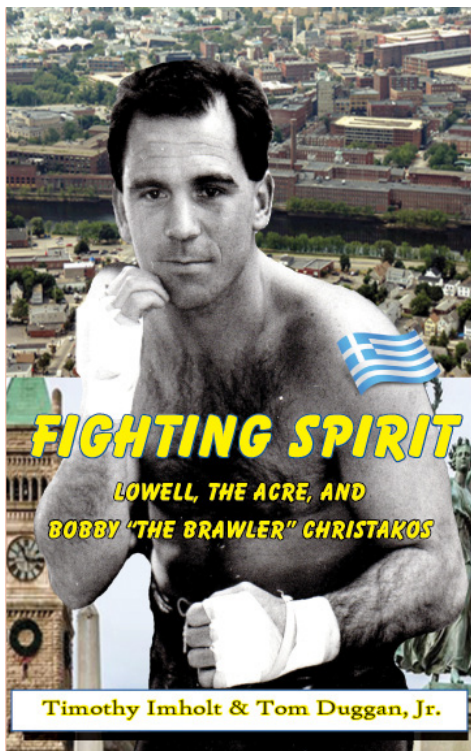
Scholarships for Lawrence High School Seniors



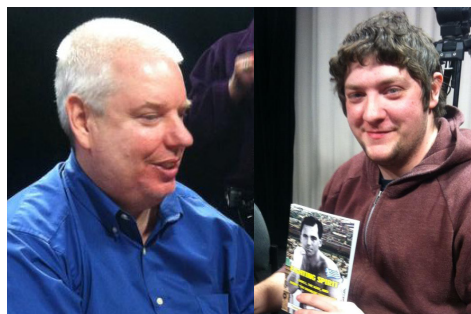
2014 Winners Sofia Cardenas and Ramses Jiminez Candelario (middle)

When you advertise in the Valley Patriot, or you support our annual BASH, you are also helping the community. This is the 6th year The Valley Patriot has been able to give college scholarships to Lawrence High School seniors through the Lawrence High School Alumni Association. Because of YOUR loyalty and support we have donated scholarships to six graduating seniors from LHS. Tonight, because of your help we make that eight. PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS: 2010-Davante Jones, Franklin Pierce University| 2011-Crismelys Ruiz, Lincoln Tech. Lowell - Med Asst.| 2012-Ambar Hussein-Martinez, Northern Essex| 2013-Thalia Garcia, Westfield State University: 2014 Sofia Cardenas and Ramses Jiminez Candelario.





Tom Duggan and his Friend Tim Imholt (Author of *Forest of Assassins*) wrote a book called *Fighting Spirit - Lowell, The Acre and Bobby "The Brawler"*. The forward was written by Lowell Mayor Rodney Elliott. Available on Amazon.com, kindle and paperback.



Chips for Charity Raises \$400 for One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue

Methuen Cable Access TV (MCTV) Host and Methuen City Councilor Jamie Atkinson held a charity poker game for The Valley Patriot's PuppyGirl and her favorite charity One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue. Participating were; Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan, Greater Lawrence Teach School Committeeman Gary Mannion, Methuen's Bill Bryant, Sean McCormack, Jamie Atkinson, and Joel Faretra. Joe Dunn of Tewksbury could not play but donated \$50. The winner (above right) was Gary Mannion who has his name on the trophy and won a free signed copy of "Fighting Spirit" by Tom Duggan and Tim Imholt.

Tonight's Awards Donated By...

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Lawrence
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(978) 685-1664



Henry's Jewellery & Awards

Our First Artie T. DeMoulas College Scholarship



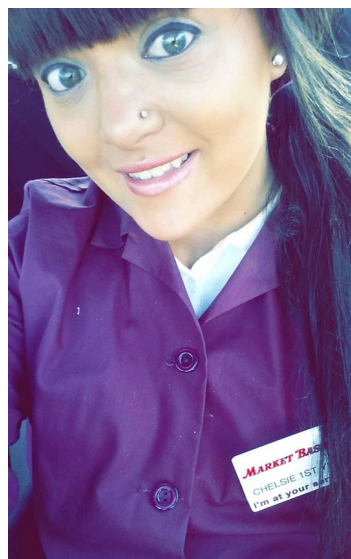
CARTOON BY DAVE SULLIVAN OF DRACUT

Chelsie Golan of North Andover

This year The Valley Patriot will give our very first Artie T. DeMoulas scholarship to a Market Basket Employee in honor of Artie “T” and all the employees who walked off the job and saved our MORE FOR YOUR DOLLAR STORE. Thank you Artie “T” and thank you to the workers, customers and food vendors for showing the rest of the country what caring for others is really all about!

The very first Valley Patriot - Artie “T” DeMoulas Scholarship goes to Chelsie Golan of North Andover. Chelsie is 22 years old and a 2011 graduate of North Andover High School. She works at the Market Basket in Salem, New Hampshire, (Store #6) and is currently attending Northern Essex Community College, majoring in

Chelsie is the daughter of a North Andover Fire-fighter and is in the process of enlisting in the United States Navy.



GOOD LUCK CHELSIE THE VALLEY PATRIOT IS PULLING FOR YOU!

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Children’s Champion Award Ceremony

April is Child Abuse
Prevention Month



There's NO excuse for child abuse!

Pay tribute to a true
Children’s Champion

Connie Ricketts
Family Services of the Merrimack Valley
Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
Program Director

Learn about efforts to prevent child
abuse in the Merrimack Valley

Thursday, April 2, 2015
from 8 to 10 a.m.

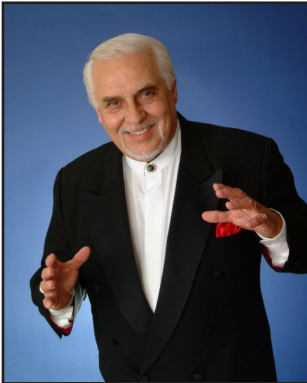
Methuen YMCA
129 Haverhill Street
Methuen, MA

Please **RSVP** by March 27th to Ellen Weinhold at 978-682-4951 x24 or email eweinhold@methuenhousing.org or Sue Mitchell at 978-681-4996 or email smitchell@glcac.org

A team effort of the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc., The Exchange Clubs of Merrimack Valley, the Merrimack Valley YMCA, and The Irish Cottage.

Please bring your business cards with you for a special raffle drawing!

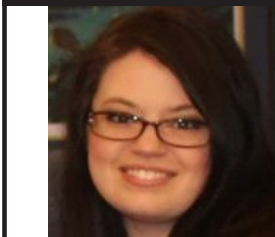




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Jerry Valley has performed over 10,000 shows worldwide. He is also an NGH certified hypnotherapist and has helped thousands of clients improve their lifestyles....AN EXHII-RATING EXPERIENCE THAT YOU WILL NEVER FOR-GET”, You can contact Jerry at the Valley Hypnosis Center, 236 Pleasant Street, Methuen, MA 01844, 978-688-6657. You can e-mail him at: jerryvalley007@aol.com

2015 Bash Host Committee



Jess Finocchiaro



Tom Duggan



Chris Eldredge



Brenda Rozzi



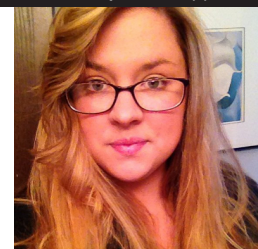
Cheryl Hajjar



Maria Fiato



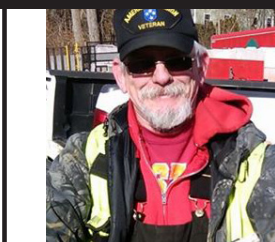
Pennie Hale



Megan Hale



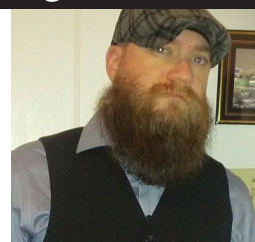
Antigone Simmons



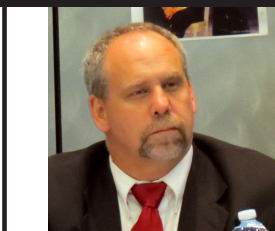
Rich Russell



Paul Murano



John Bergeron



Eric Melanson



Joyce Tomaselli



Gracemarie Tomaselli

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 Properties and Lyric Consulting
 Author Tim Imholt, Forest of Assassins,
 John Macdonald of Big Decisions LLC,
 Keith Wlodyka and The Daily Dose Cafe
 The Coffee Cann Cafe in Lawrence,
 Doctors Express in North Andover & Methuen,
 Remax Insight -Team Zingales,
 Corey Tree and Landscaping in Haverhill,
 John Berthium of Northern Process Servers,
 Colizzi Memorials in Methuen,
 John Felci of Patriot Ambulance,
 Author, Kathleen Laplante,
 Sheehan's Towing in Methuen,
 Register of Deeds M. Paul Iannuccillo,
 Deb Canejo, Elite Body Massage, and Salon
 Nichole on Merrimack Street in Lawrence,
 Groveland Selectman Joe D'Amore,
 Flavor Fresh Fruit Salad,
 Lawrence High Alumni Association,

Hypnotist Jerry Valley,
 Sullivan Insurance,
 Joyce and Gracemarie Tomaselli,
 Rick Bellanti of Bell Aire Music Productions,
 Copilabs in Lawrence,
 Henry's Jewelry and Awards on Essex St in
 Lawrence,
 Lawrence Firefighters Association,
 980WCAP on Lowell
 State Rep. Frank Moran,
 State Rep. Diana DiZoglio,
 State Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives, Methuen
 City Councilor Jamie Atkinson
 One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue in Haverhill
 GLT School Committee Jessica Finocchiaro,
 Methuen City Councilor Sean Fountain,
 Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera,
 Omni Digital Printing in Lawrence,
 Joe Viel, Cemetery Services in Lawrence
 Cheryl Hajjar and her Paci Pixies
 Lawrence Firefighters Relief Association
 Methuen Police Patrolman's Association *
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 Mark Dubinsky
 Methuen Councilor Ron Marsan & Dian Marsan
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**Bring in this coupon for a
Free 8 oz Hummus
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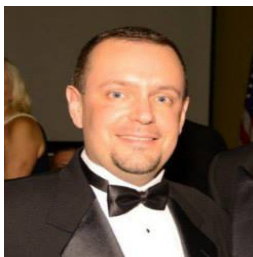
**Eat in or Pickup orders only
 Offer expires 4/20/15*

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Wednesday: 11:00AM - 8:00 PM

Thursday - Saturday: 11:00 - 9:00 PM

Sunday: CLOSED



"Thank you to The Valley Patriot for all you have done to help our veterans, our police officers and our firefighters. Happy 11th Anniversary!"

~John MacDonald



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I Remember how they Laughed 11 Years and 137 Editions Ago

I REMEMBER SO WELL ...

I remember when the very first edition of The Valley Patriot was delivered to my office in Lawrence City Hall back in 2004. I had never seen anything like it. It was a breath of fresh air for free speech in the Lawrence area! Tom, you and your team have come a long way since those days, you ought to be proud!

I also remember taking my share of criticism in the pages of this newspaper, but it was always fair and never personal.

Mostly, I remember when you first unveiled your vision for standards in journalism, how you were laughed at and mocked by the political insiders and the newspaper industry.

**CONGRATULATIONS
ON GETTING THE
LAST LAUGH!**

Mike Sullivan



(Then) Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan in July of 2005 at the placement of our very first newspaper box on Mt. Vernon St. in Lawrence.

VALLEY PATRIOT AWARDS

VALLEY PATRIOT GOOD WILL AMBASSADOR AWARD

Once called the Honorable Mention Award, The Goodwill Ambassador Award is given to TWO people who do not necessarily work for The Valley Patriot but act as our goodwill ambassadors in the community, whether through the press, or pitching in to volunteer for one of The Valley Patriot's many projects in some outstanding way.

PREVIOUS WINNERS:

(2013) Mike Grammont & Tracey Zysk

(2014) Rich Russel & Shawn Hansen



2015 Nominees:
John Bergeron
Jessica Finocchiario
John Macdonald
Clay Evans
Joyce & Gracemarie Tomaselli



VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD

Each year The Valley Patriot honors two Valley Patriot contributors for outstanding writing or taking the high road in public discourse while also taking very bold stands on some of the most important issues that shape our culture and our community. Columnists, reporters, and even letter writers are eligible for this award. Previous winners of this award have exposed corruption, called out elected officials for bad behavior, provided exceptional information to the public and/or attracted a whole new demographic of readers to the paper.

PREVIOUS WINNERS:

(2013) Joe D'Amore & Lonnie Brennan.

(2014) Paul Murano & Jeff Katz



2015 NOMINEES:

Bill Cushing
Dani Langevin
Kathy Runge
John MacDonald
Christine Morabito
Dr. Frank MacMillan
Anna Debernardo



VALLEY PATRIOT PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Tonight we honor two members of The Valley Patriot family with The Valley Patriot President's Award. Nominees and winners were chosen personally by Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan. Nominees of this award were chosen for their unique and/or outstanding contribution in the operations of the paper. Previous winners have helped us get the paper to the printer in emergency situations so that we don't miss a deadline, gone out in snowstorms to shovel out our street boxes, promoted us to local businesses for advertising, or provided exceptional material to the paper that nobody else could contribute.

PREVIOUS WINNERS:

(2013) Christine Morabito & Dan Selenius

(2014) Dave Sullivan & Dani Langevin



2015 NOMINEES:

Christine Morabito
Margaret Crow
Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan
Alex Talcott
Mike Gagliardi
John Macdonald



VALLEY PATRIOT AWARDS

*VALLEY PATRIOT 1ST AMENDMENT PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD

Each year this award is given to 2 individuals who show with their actions that they value the 1st Amendment to the Constitution. Winner of this award have made a significant difference in holding public officials accountable, fought for transparency in government and gone above and beyond the call of duty to defend and protect our right of free speech, a free press, freedom of religion and/or being a whistle-blower. They are or have taken ACTION, bold action, to make sure the public is more informed about what their government leaders and representatives are up to. Without individuals like this on the front lines in the war against a free speech and a free press our freedoms could be lost.

PREVIOUS WINNERS: (2014) Auditor Suzanne Bump & Senator Katy Ives



2015 NOMINEES:
Rep. Diana DiZoglio
Richard D'Agostino
Tracy Watson
Rep. Jim Lyons
Michael Sweeney
Colonel Sam Poulten
Kathy Runge
Bill Manzi



* 1ST AMENDMENT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

* VALLEY PATRIOT HERO VETERAN AWARD

Because honoring Veterans is so much a part of what we do at The Valley Patriot, tonight we honor two people who themselves honor our hero service men and women here at home. Honoring our veterans and recognizing their incredible sacrifices is one of the most important things we do at The Valley Patriot. Tonight we honor two veterans who not only served their country overseas but continued to serve their country when they came home. Whether it is public service, volunteering in the community or helping other veterans here at home, tonight's recipients are men who embody what service and sacrifice are all about.

PREVIOUS WINNERS: (2013) David Swarbrick, John Lenottee, & Helen Mooradkian (2014) Francisco Urena & Tom Fallon.

2015 NOMINEES:

Bruce Arnold
John Ratka
Eric Nelson
John MacDonald





2014 Winners: Lawrence Firefighter Manny Gonzalez (middle) & Amesbury Police Officer Jason Kookan (2nd from right)

Valley Patriot & R.Mushow Photography

***OFFICER TOM DUGGAN SR. LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD**

On March 16, 1990, Lawrence Police Officer Tom Duggan Sr. lost his life in the line of duty. He was a man who loved being a police officer and lived his life responding to cries for help in the community. While he worked on many major cases and high profile crimes, he always said that it was the day to day work he did on and off duty to help people in small ways that really made his job worth doing. This year we honor his service and sacrifice with "The Valley Patriot, Officer Tom Duggan Sr., Law Enforcement Award." The award is given to members of public safety (police or fire) and/or 1 civilians who honors the service and personal sacrifice police officers and firefighters make every day. Officer Duggan believed that those little extra things we do in life to help others ... make the biggest differences in people's lives at the end of the day and makes the world around us a better place.

PREVIOUS WINNERS: (2014): Scott Emerson & Methuen Police Officer Dan O'Connell.

(2014) Amesbury Police Officer Jason Kookan & Lawrence Firefighter Manny Gonzalez

2015 NOMINEES:

**Retired Woburn Police Officer Bob DiNapoli,
Lawrence Deputy Fire Chief Brian Murphy**



Methuen Police Officer Dan O'Connor-2013



Wheelabrator's Scott Emerson 2013

25

Year Remembrance...

You will never be forgotten

**Lawrence Police Officer
Tom Duggan, Sr.**



**Killed in the line of duty
March 16, 1990**



It's not how they died that makes them heroes, but how they lived



Comedian

John Molori

john.molori@facebook.com



THANK YOU FOR 11 YEARS OF SUPPORT!!!



**THERE IS NOBODY WHO STEPS TO THE PLATE
FASTER THAN THE VALLEY PATRIOT!
FOR 11 YEARS THE VALLEY PATRIOT HAS BEEN
THERE TO SUPPORT THE FIREFIGHTERS OF
METHUEN AT THE DROP OF A HAT
WHENEVER NEEDED!**

THANK YOU TOMMY FOR ALL YOU DO!!

**Methuen Firefighters Union,
Local 1691 I.A.F.F**

Fund Raiser to Save the Puppies

Kate Whitney

VALLEY PATRIOT PUPPYGIRL

It's that time again and One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue is holding its third annual comedy fundraiser to raise money for our organization. The show is slated for Saturday April 18th, at Mixx 360 in Malden where it was held last year.

We are hoping to see all our Valley Patriot readers and One Tail past adopters and volunteers there to support us!

If you cannot attend, you can always help us sell tickets or participate by making up a basket for the raffle (alcohol themed baskets were a big hit last year, as well a gift certificates to local restaurants). We will be creating a flyer for the event that we will send out soon and publish in The Valley Patriot's April edition so anyone interested can pass out and/or post to your social media accounts.

As you know we are a 100% volunteer based organization and rely on donations and fund-raising in the community for our sustainability. Please reach out to family, friends, neighbors



and let's make April 18th not only a night filled with fun and laughter, but a night that will replenish our depleted funds so we can save more puppies!

If you would like to make up a basket to donate for the raffle please email me at: erika.smith@cybergrants.com or Christen at: reflectionsbychristen@hotmail.com

Movie Listings: (978) 465-7641

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**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
VALLEY PATRIOT**

ON 11 GREAT YEARS OF
REPORTING THE LATEST
BREAKING NEWS
IN THE MERRIMACK VALLEY

METHUEN
EAST DISTRICT COUNCILLOR
RON MARSAN

Happy 11Th Anniversary

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT ...



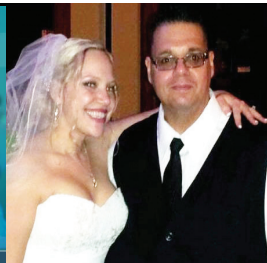
The Methuen Police Patrolman's Association & Superior Officers' Union

For the last eleven years The Valley Patriot has shown an undying commitment to law enforcement and it has not gone unnoticed by those of us who wear the uniform. From the men and women of the Methuen Police Patrolman's Association and the Methuen Police Superior Officers' Association we want to say THANK YOU to Tom Duggan and everyone at The Valley Patriot. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed by those of us who are charged with protecting and serving the public! Thank you for objectively reporting the truth in an industry that should take notes from your success.

Bell-Aire Music

PRODUCTIONS and EVENT LIGHTING

bellairemusic.com



Bell-Aire Music Productions & Event Lighting is a Mobile DJ Entertainment Company from Methuen, MA, providing professional Disc Jockey Music, Event Planning & Venue Up-Lighting for all of the New England areas



Specializes in Weddings and private events
School Events, Dances, Proms and Graduations

***COME JOIN US AT THE VALLEY PATRIOT
ANNIVERSARY BASH, MARCH 22nd**
And watch Bell~Aire Music Productions in ACTION!

1 Market Street in Lawrence from 7-11pm

Phone 978 902-7041

Email: DJRick@bellairemusic.com

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With over 20 years of experience in the music business, Rick Bellanti has an extensive knowledge of songs spanning over nine decades. He knows how to read a crowd and plays a wide variety of music at every event, covering the Big Band era through today's popular Top 40 music hits.

This years annual Bride's Choice Awards™

The Grand Menorah Lightingin North Andover

Three years ago when our publisher found out that the annual lighting of the Grand Menorah may not take place in North Andover for lack of sponsors, he contacted Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Center of Merrimack Valley and offered to help keep the local tradition going. For the last three years the Valley Patriot has sponsored the Grand Menorah Lighting on North Andover Common thanks to our advertisers and our BASH sponsors. THANK YOU ALL!



Eleven years ago there was only one regional newspaper in The Valley...

and then something wonderful happened....

The Birth of The Valley Patriot!

THANK YOU
VALLEY PATRIOT FOR
BRINGING REAL NEWS TO
THE MERRIMACK VALLEY!



FROM YOUR FRIEND

DJ DEEB

METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TONIGHT'S BASH PROGRAM DONATED BY COPILABS!



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Celebrating 11 Years of The Valley Patriot

We will miss this year's Anniversary
BASH but will be celebrating with you
from Oxford University!

Joe & Yolanda D'Amore

Sheehan's Towing



**Best Wishes Valley Patriot on
the 11th Anniversary BASH!**

26 Lawrence St. Methuen, MA 01844 Phone: (978) 687-9378



Let Coffee Cann Cafe help you
start the New Year off right with
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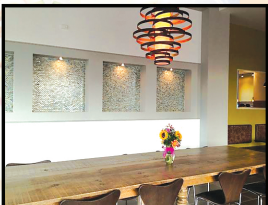


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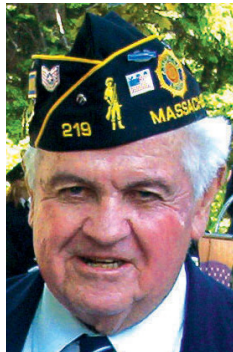
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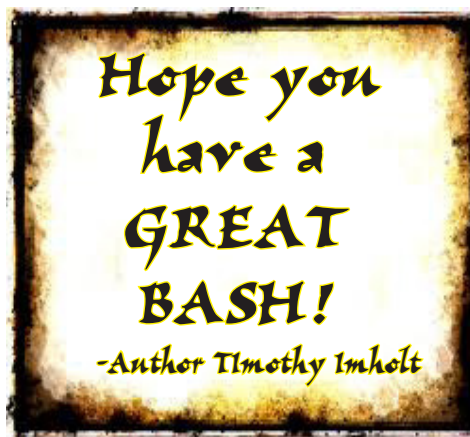
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And thank you Valley Patriot for all you do to help worthy charities in the community!

Long before I ever ran for office I was a loyal reader of The Valley Patriot. As the Lawrence City Council President, and now a State Representative, I find it vital to keeping up with what's going on in my district. Tommy, Ralph and Chuck, *Congratulations* on hitting yet *another* milestone, your 11TH ANNIVERSARY!

Reading The Valley Patriot in 2004

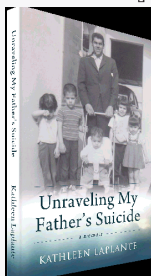


HAPPY 11TH ANNIVERSARY!

FRANK MORAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

THANK YOU Valley Patriot!! and Happy 11th Anniversary!

The Valley Patriot has been a unique source of sanity in this world, refusing to bow to convention and always putting the facts first! THANK YOU!



"Unraveling my Father's Suicide" is available on-line
unravelingmyfatherssuicide.com



~Author Kathleen Laplante

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The Valley Patriot

"Congress shall make no law..."

Volume 1, Issue 1

March 2004

16 Pages

School Committee Bills Taxpayers for Fine Dining

Tom Duggan

For the past three years members of the Lawrence School Committee have been billing the taxpayers for plush dining at the city's most expensive restaurant: One Mill Street.

Then School Committeemen Noah Shannon, Pedro Ace, Suzanne Picciello, Nancy Kennedy and current member George Gonzalez all dined with Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy and his staff after school board meetings running up tabs worth over \$1,200.00.

Documents obtained by The Valley Patriot show that state taxpayers treated members of the Lawrence School Committee to more than a dozen expensive meals between 2001-2003.

Meal reimbursement receipts show School Board members helped themselves to veal, sirloin steak, calamari, pork chops, duck, steak salad, garlic shrimp, mussels, scallops, spinach chicken, assorted appetizers and other various menu items. The meals were then billed to the Lawrence Public Schools which receives 100% of it's funding from the state and federal government.

While Superintendent Laboy's \$156,000 a year contract does not include a meal allowance, he says that some of his expenses are reimbursable. "I don't have a meal allowance but it is accepted



"...the Ethics Commission should be informed about this. They should pay back every penny with interest and issue a written apology to the school children and the citizens of Lawrence."

Michael Sweeney
Lawrence School Committee

practice for me to be reimbursed for certain expenses as long as they are reasonable and sensible," he said.

School Committee members, on the other hand, do not have that luxury. According to the School Committee policy (B-18) "School Committee members shall receive no compensation for their services. However, upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the Committee, Committee members may be reimbursed from district funds." This never took place regarding meal receipts from One Mill Street.

Instead, some School Committee members took advantage of their position as

Continued on Page 8

Smith v. Smedile for N. A. Selectman

Valley Patriot Staff



While North Andover School Committeemen Al Perry has no challenger for his seat, Selectman Rosemary Smedile is facing a familiar face to the voters in her bid for reelection.

Joe Edward Smith, an engineer by trade and a union Democrat, says his campaign is about open government and representing issues important to the town voters. "There is a big difference between Ms. Smedile and myself," he said. "Before the voters decide who will represent them on March 30th it is important that they know what those difference are."

"I opposed the trash transfer station and Ms. Smedile supported it." Smith also said Smedile supported leasing half the airport land adding, "the people of North Andover clearly wanted it sold off. It is important to represent the people of the town and act on their behalf." Smith says he opposes \$95,000 in raises for nonunion employees "especially at a time when we are talking about laying off fire

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Sullivan: "Absent All Auto Fraud, Insurance Rates Won't Go Down!"

Tom Duggan



"...if you call the Board of Insurance today and ask them... 'if the auto fraud goes away completely (in Lawrence), at what point will the rates go down?' They will tell you what they told me last week, they won't."

...Lawrence Mayor,

Michael J. Sullivan

Lawrence - Mayor Michael Sullivan says that even if police investigations are capable of eliminating all auto insurance fraud in the City of Lawrence, "auto insurance rates still won't go down."

Sullivan, touting the hard work of Police Chief John Romero and the Lawrence Police Department, said that the investigations into auto insurance fraud in Lawrence were producing startling results but added, "If you call the Board of Insurance today and ask, just for example, 'if the auto fraud goes away completely (in Lawrence) at what point will the rates go down?' What they will tell you is what they told me last week, they won't."

For years, State Legislators, previous mayors and police chiefs have been telling Lawrence residents that the high auto insurance rates in the city (the third highest in the state) are the result of insurance fraud. Sullivan says that simply isn't the case.

"What we are finding out is that, what will cause rates to go down (in Lawrence) is for the rest of the cities and towns in the state to tackle fraud in their communities as well. It would have to be a statewide effort. I think the insurance companies, years ago should have been doing the investigative work that the Lawrence police are doing this year."

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